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The Foundation Behaviours Down

Down			
Requirements – Training Lead, Treats, Dish			
Reminder – Marker Word is GOOD! Or use clicker			
Current Behaviour	No down behaviour or down is limited	Goal Behaviour	Down on cue Down as a mutually exclusive behaviour
Sets	5 treats in a set	Repeated	Depending on the physiology of the dog, repeat 1 set with lure, 1 set with lure signal mark then treat. Stop here. Once the dog is doing the behaviour, without the lure, add the verbal cue, prior to the hand signal
Preparation	The dog needs to know the sit command first before trying this as a sit is a precursor behaviour to the down. Treats and a mat – this is also the required behaviour for the ‘relaxation training’ If the dog has a favourite hip then allow them to relax into this position		
Step 1	Ask for a sit. Reward the first one. Ask for a sit, now with the treat in your hand, lure down from nose to floor with in between the front paws. Like a plumb line from nose to floor! <i>Do not physically push the dog down as this will create resistance!</i> As the dog follows the treat the bottom may come up just wait and hold the treat in your hand.		
Step 2	Once the dog goes down – release the treat Throw another treat to get them out of position unless they can do a sit again. Do not reward the sit in this instance.		
Step 3	Repeat step 1 2 more times with the treat in the hand. Mark ‘GOOD’, reward		
Step 4	Repeat the process but without treat in the hand , same hand signal. Dog goes down Mark ‘GOOD’ and reward from treat pouch or treat tub on a nearby chair or table.		



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Break	Give the dog a break from this exercise by adding in a hand touch or another behaviour. End on a positive. Play or relax the dog.
Step 5	<p>Do one rep with a treat in the hand, dog does down, MARK and reward</p> <p>Do two-reps with no treats in the hand, dog goes down, MARK and reward</p> <p>Now ask for a down using the other hand, dog goes down, MARK and reward x 2</p>
Step 6	<p>Using learning momentum add a cue. DOWN although some use 'flat' or 'drop'</p> <p>Say your cue work 'DOWN' and wait, if needed then add the hand signal (the luring behaviour to gain a down), dog goes down, MARK and reward</p> <p>Repeat say 'DOWN' and wait, let the dog work it out, dog goes down, MARK and reward</p>
<p>Proofing the behaviour – by using different surfaces (substrate) and different hands to assist if needed (start to make the hand lure a smaller signal), fade the hand signal once the dog gets the cue word</p> <p>Different locations – use a different room. Remember when you change something with a dog such as the environment you may need to go back a stage or two, however learning has been done with this behaviour and you will find that the dog takes less time to go through the repetitions.</p> <p>Just for the record – I had a Shih Tzu x Lhaso Apso who took three weeks to gain this behaviour. Rather than giving up I just asked after I could see that the dog was getting frustrated for another behaviour that she knew. Remember your dog needs to have a <i>positive emotional response to training</i>, as otherwise it becomes an aversive and they will not be productive in their training as well as the stress hormone – cortisol – inhibiting learning and memory</p> <p>Read 'Proofing' and 'Positive Associations'</p>	